(c) and (d) Minimum Support Price of wheat is revised every year before the commencement of Rabi Marketing Season. For the current Rabi marketing Season 1997-98, the MSP announced is Rs.415/- per quintal. In addition, the farmers will be paid a Central Bounus of Rs.60/- per quintal for selling wheat to public procuring agencies during the period from 17.3.1997 to 10.6.1997.

Reforms in Examination System

*497. DR. B.B. DUTTA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that our examination system causes anxiety and stress in children by emphasizing rote learning instead of understanding;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto;

(c) whether Government propose to bring about reforms in the examination system; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI S.R. BOMMAI): (a) to (d) There are a variety of examination system in vogue at differents stages of education in the country. The stress experienced by examinees is related to a number of factors including individual personality, home environment, peer pressure and a situation in which career opportunities are very limited in relation to mounting number of aspirants and examinations being a major determinant of career path.

2. Implementation of the examination reforms is a continuous process. The functional steps envisaged in the National Policy on Education 1986 and reiterated in the Programme of Action 1992 include elimination of excessive elements of chance and subjectivity, de-emphasis of memorisation, continuous and comprehensive evaluation, improvement in conduct of examination, introduction of semester system from Secondary stage and use of grades in place of marks.

Implementation of Scheme for Supplying Foodgrains at Half Price

*498. SHRI N. GIRI PRASAD:
SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:

Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the scheme for supplying foodgrains at half-price to the people below poverty line has been implemented;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if the answer to part (a) be in the negative, the stand of the Government on this scheme and by when it is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a to (c) A statement on the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) has been made in the Rajya Sabha on 24th February, 1997 and detailed guidelines issued in this regard have also been laid on the Table of the House. As per the guidelines, the State Governments/UT Administrations are required to identify the beneficiaries living below the poverty line, based on the provisional estimates arrived at by the Planning Commission adopting the methodology of "Expert Group on estimation of proportion and number of poor" constituted by the Planning Commission under the Chairmanship of Late Prof. Lakdawala. The State Governments/UT Administrations have accordingly been asked to identify the beneficiaries below the poverty line, issue special cards to them and make all necessary arrangements for delivery of foodgrains to the beneficiaries in a satisfactory and transparent manner. As soon as a State/UT completes this exercise, it can start deriving the benefits under the scheme. As per information received, Tripura and Haryana have already started

implementing the scheme w.e.f. 1.5.1997. All other States except Meghalaya, Punjab and Delhi are likely to start the scheme from 1st June, 1997.

The details of the TPDS have been given in the guidelines already laid on the Table of the House and duly issued to the States/UTs.

Out of Course Questions in CBSE Papers

*499. SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH:
SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of questions of various subjects were out of course in the question papers of 10th and 12th class examinations of CBSE, Delhi, held in February-March, 1997;

(b) if so, the details of the questions, subject-wise and class-wise, which were not prescribed in the NCERT books;

(c) the reasons for prescribing questions from out of syllabus for these examinations;

(d) the persons responsible for this lapse; and

(e) the steps Government propose to take to prescribe questions only from the NCERT text books?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI S.R. BOMMAI): (a) to (e) Questions are set in Class X and XII examinations conducted by CBSE based on the syllabus drawn up by CBSE for these Classes. According to the CBSE none of the questions is outside the scope of syllabus. A few representations have been received regarding the level of difficulty of questions in the recently conducted examination. These are being considered in consultation with the experts.

Short-Term Crop Loan to the Farmers of North-Eastern States

*500. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of non-advancing of short-term crop loans to the farmers especially in the North-East States after the loan-waiving scheme of the then Janata Party Government;

(b) if so, the steps contemplated by Government for refinancing the farmers of backward State for increasing the crop production; and

(c) by when it is likely to be given to the farmers?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) and (b) Advancement of Crop Loans has not been stopped in the North-Eastern States after the implementation of ARDR Scheme. NABARD has continued to provide credit limits to Banks in North East Region.

(c) Does not arise.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Relaxation of Guidelines for Financial Assistance to the States Affected by Natural Calamities

3649. SHRI SANJAY DALMIA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any demand to relax the guidelines to provide financial assistance to the States affected by natural calamities, like cyclone, drought, flood, etc.;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps being taken by Government in this regard?